



The Marked Man



mystery thriller crime

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Chapter 1 by ROHIT NAIR

“Wake up Dad....its 8.a.m already. You promised to take me to school today..!!” It was the sweetest voice he ever heard. ‘Sarah....’ he thought. He loved being waked up by her sweet voice, her bright blue eyes and her innocent smile. But today she won’t be smiling....he hadn’t kept his promise to her, and she hated that.

John opened his eyes.

It was pitch black. The horrible stench of faeces and rotten things hit him hard. He could feel the worms crawling all over his body. He had passed out in the sewer. No longer able to stand the stench, John turned over and retched.. The place was overrun with mice and cockroaches. They went about doing their usual sniffing and running around without caring much about the dying visitor amidst them, and for that John was grateful. A mischief of mice biting him was the last thing he needed now. Groping for the walls in the darkness, he made an attempt to stand up. He could see nothing in the darkness. ‘Am I blind..?’ he thought to himself. ‘Did some stupid mouse bite my eyes off while I passed out..?’ He felt dizzy and weak in his legs. The fever was still there, and so were the bullets lodged in his body. The wounds, some which still found a way to bleed, showed no signs of healing. He wondered how long he could carry on. He had stayed too long in the sewer. He needed to get out and see a bloody doctor. But the Doctors would just turn him away. John will not be their regular patient if he decided to turn up on their door. He reeked, had no money, the chances of him surviving seemed bleak and he would by now be a known fugitive. His cover was blown. His portrait might be all over the place by now. The police

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men who broke his body and his soul. The filthy killers who had killed his family. He did not know their names, they were just some other killers with false identities, like John was. His past had come back to haunt him, to take everything away from him. He sure didn't know their names, but their faces were etched deep in his heart. Those faces would never fade away....nor would the screams of his wife and his daughter. It still rang stark in his ears...driving him mad. Revenge was all he wanted; revenge was all that he had in his mind.

John winced in pain. The walk was more exhausting than he thought. Losing blood didn't help him either. He could see a faint light ahead. It seemed like a manhole from distance. He prayed that it be true, not some fever dream he was having and moved towards it. The sewer lid was some 15 foot above the ground. He looked around in the faint light. '*My only companion..heh*' he thought looking at the lone mouse that seemed to have followed him. Gathering all the remaining strength, he made a lunge for the rusty ladder.

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